

CLAIM LISTING

Applicants request that, pursuant to this amendment, the following listing of claims replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the instant application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Previously Presented) A method of connecting businesses through common interests and for facilitating business relationships among businesses comprising:

identifying a plurality of businesses to participate in an online business registry;

storing business profiles comprising business attributes in an online business registry, wherein each business profile is associated with one of the identified businesses and includes for each identified business one or more market segments associated with the identified business, a corresponding customer list for each of said market segments, one or more business functions associated with each of said market segments, wherein the business attributes corresponding to each of the market segments associated with a stored business profile are classified into one of a plurality of access levels;

responsive to a query from an inquiring business, searching said online business registry to locate at least one business having a business profile including at least one business attributes corresponding to said query;

for each of the market segments associated with the inquiring business, determining whether the inquiring business and at least one located business are competitors in said market segment based upon a comparison of customer lists associated with the market segment and associated business functions;

establishing at least one communications link between said inquiring business and said located business according to at least one business attribute of said business profile of said located business; and

providing access to the inquiring business to at least a portion of the business attributes of the located business, wherein access to the business attributes of said located business corresponding to one of said market segments is restricted to less than all of the

plurality of access levels if the located business and the inquiring business are determined to be competitors in said one of said market segments.

2. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said online business registry conforms to a Universal Description Discovery and Integration (UDDI) specification, and wherein said searching step comprises searching said online business registry according to said query, wherein said specified business attribute is common to said inquiring business.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said storing step comprises storing business attributes selected from the group consisting of business identity information, business description information, and communications information.

4. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said establishing a communications link step comprises extracting said communications information from said business profile of said located business.

5. (Original) The method according to claim 3, wherein said storing step further comprises:

- defining access rights to said business profiles;
- defining permissible communications links and points of contact as business attributes within said business profiles; and
- defining selected business attributes of said business profiles as private.

6. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said establishing a communications link step further comprises authenticating at least said inquiring business.

7. (Previously Presented) A method of connecting businesses through common interests comprising:

storing business profiles for a plurality of businesses, said business profiles comprising business attributes in an online business registry, wherein each business profile is associated with one of said plurality of businesses, wherein each business profile identifies a corresponding business by one or more market segments occupied by said business, list of customers for each of said market segments, and business function performed by the corresponding business in said market segments, and wherein the business attributes corresponding to said market segments for each stored business profile are classified into one of a plurality of access levels;

responsive to a query from an inquiring business specifying at least one business attribute, locating within said online business registry business profiles corresponding to said specified business attribute;

for each of said market segments associated with the inquiring business, determining whether the inquiring business and at least one located business are competitors in said market segment based upon a comparison of business functions in said market segment corresponding to the inquiring business and at least one located business;

permitting access to the inquiring business to at least a portion of the business attributes of the located business, wherein access to the business attributes of said located business corresponding to one of said market segments is restricted to less than all of the plurality of access levels if the located business and the inquiring business are determined to be competitors in said one of said market segments;

identifying within said located business profiles references to other business profiles contained within said online business registry; and

determining whether said other business profiles include business attributes corresponding to said query, wherein said plurality of businesses comprise businesses associated with said located business profiles, businesses associated with said other business profiles, and said inquiring business.

8. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 7, further comprising:
establishing a communications link between said inquiring business and at least one of said other businesses having a business attribute corresponding to said query, wherein the communication link is established according to business attributes of said at least one other business.
9. (Original) The method of claim 7, wherein said locating step locates within said online business registry business profiles corresponding to said specified business attribute, wherein said specified business attribute is a business identity.
10. (Original) The method of claim 7, wherein said locating step comprises locating in said online business registry, business profiles associated with said specified business attribute of said query, wherein said specified business attribute is common to said inquiring business.
11. (Original) The method of claim 7, wherein said storing step comprises storing business attributes selected from the group consisting of business identity information, business description information, and communications information.
12. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 11, wherein said establishing a communications link step comprises extracting said communications information from said business profile of at least one of said other businesses, and wherein said online business registry conforms to a Universal Description Discovery and Integration (UDDI) specification.
13. (Original) The method according to claim 11, wherein said storing step further comprises:
defining access rights to said business profiles;

defining permissible communications links and points of contact as business attributes within said business profiles; and

defining selected business attributes of said business profiles as private.

14 (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein said establishing a communications link step further comprises authenticating at least said inquiring business.

15. – 29. (Cancelled)

30. (Previously Presented) A method of connecting businesses through common interests comprising:

storing business profiles for a plurality of businesses in an online business registry, said business profiles comprising a plurality of business attributes associated with each of said businesses;

responsive to a query from an inquiring business, searching said online business registry to locate at least one of said plurality of businesses having a business profile including at least one business attribute corresponding to said query, said business attributes for each of said businesses including one or more market segments associated with each of said businesses, a customer list corresponding to said market segments, at least one business function corresponding to said market segments;

for each of the market segments associated with the inquiring business, determining whether the inquiring business and at least one located business are competitors based upon a comparison of customer lists and associated business functions;

providing access to the inquiring business to at least a portion of the business attributes of the located business, wherein access to portions of the business attributes of said located business corresponding to one of said market segments is restricted if the located business and the inquiring business are determined to be competitors in said one of said market segments; and

establishing at least one communications link between said inquiring business and said located business according to at least one business attribute of said business profile of said located business and providing over said communications link an indication as to whether the inquiring business is a competitor of the located business with which said communications link is established;

wherein said at least one communications link is established by establishing at least one of a telephone call, a conference call, and a video conference.

31. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 30, wherein the business attributes include communication information, and wherein the at least one communications link is established based upon the communication information.

32. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 31, wherein the communication information comprises at least one of a preferred contact time and a pre-selected contact person.

33. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 32, wherein the at least one communications link comprises a plurality of communications link, and wherein establishing at least one communications link further comprises selecting one of the plurality of communications links based on at least one of the preferred contact time and pre-selected contact person.